



HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Mr Ben Chapman MP
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DoR 06/09/02

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4 June 2009

Dear Mr Chapman

I wrote to you on 19 May with preliminary findings in respect of your Additional Costs Allowance claims for 2002 and 2003. This followed certain disclosures in the press about mortgage payments. I indicated that it appeared that you had been given incorrect advice by an official in this Department and that you had acted on this wrong advice. I suggested a further discussion between us once I had had time to look into the matter.

I have since reviewed the paperwork held and I am satisfied that incorrect advice was indeed given. I am satisfied too that despite a letter from you on 23 June 2003 this error was not properly identified until September and it was some months before it was fully rectified, which added to the amount you incorrectly claimed. However when the mistake was verified, the Department took the matter very seriously: it was not swept under the carpet. There was an internal investigation and the appropriate action taken in accordance with normal personnel practice on such matters in the House.

The error was all the more unfortunate because under the rules prevailing at the time, you would in fact have had other legitimate expenses against which to claim. It is also likely that such expenses would have equalled, and perhaps exceeded, the notional amount of mortgage you claimed. In that sense, one could argue that there was no overall loss to public funds.

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As I said in my earlier letter, I regret that a mistake was made by the Department. I personally regret too the distress which is now being caused to you.

We have agreed to meet again next week.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terry Bird', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Terry Bird
Director of Operations